THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) The export of tea from India increased from 192.44 million kgs. in 1999-2000 to 203.55 million kgs. in 2000-01. However, in the subsequent financial year, 2001 -02, the export declined to 190 million kgs.

(c) FDI in tea sector which has been recently approved by the Central Government would assist in generating the required capital for modernization of the tea industry and rejuvenating the tea plantation sector. This, in turn would help the Indian tea industry become more competitive in the world market.

(d) to (f) The Government has set an export target of 200 million kgs. of tea for the current financial year 2002-03 and about 55% of the annual target has been achieved in the first seven months *i.e.* April-October, 2002. It is not possible to predict regarding shortfall in the fulfilment of the target at this juncture. Efforts are underway to fulfil the targets fixed.

Imbalances in decision making in WTO

2532. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose reforms to address imbalances in global decision making in relation to trades;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to help better representation of interest at WTO in the face of decisions being taken by influential countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV-PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) Article IX of the Marakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO (WTO Agreement) provides the basis for decision making in the WTO. It lays down that the "WTO shall continue the practice of decision-making by concensus followed under GATT 1947. Except as otherwise provided, a decision cannot be arrived at by consensus, the matter at issue shall be decided by voting. At meetings of the Ministerial Conference and the General Council (the highest decision making organs of the WTO), each Member of the WTO shall have one vote....Decisions of the Ministerial Conference and the

General Council shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast, unless otherwise provided in this Agreement or in the relevant Multilateral Trade Agreement (annexed to the WTO Agreement)". This Article also provides for exceptions in some specific circumstances.

Keeping in view the fact that decisions taken by the WTO affect the interests of all its Members, India and other members of the Like Minded Group of countries, that are WTO Members, such as Malaysia, Egypt, Indonesia, Cuba and Uganda, held consultations among themselves and submitted a proposal to the WTO General Council with a view to ensuring transparency, stability and consistency in the procedures adopted at the Ministerial Conferences as well as the preparatory processes thereto. Presently, the Chairman of the General Council is holding informal consultations on this proposal and the proposal submitted by other WTO Members.

Meeting of Trade Ministers of ASEAN and India

2533. SHRI PREMCHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for the first time on 15th September, 2002, Trade Ministers of ASEAN countries and India met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to discuss economic cooperation and to extend the linkages and synergy between India and the ASEAN countries;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the potential of a combined market size of 1.5 billion people of India and ASEAN which is yet to be tapped to optimum is limitless; and

(c) if so, the details of initiative and plan for its development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) The first ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM)-lndia Consultations was held on 15th September, 2002 in Brunei Darussalam.

(b) A joint study on AFTA India Linkages for the Enhancement of Trade and Investment undertaken by the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade